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L E T T E R
TO THE
BISHOP of EXETER.

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LETTER.

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God

G E O R G E,

Lord BISHOP of Exeter.

Occasioned by his LORDSHIP's late
Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese; in
Defence of those Principles of the Methodists,
objected to in his LORDSHIP's Charge.

By a CLERGYMAN of the Church of
ENGLAND.

*We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our
Lord.* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Viva est et Victrix, si modo vera Fides.

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TO THE
Right Rev. Father in GOD,
G E O R G E,
LORD BISHOP
OF
E X E T E R.

My LORD,



Am a Clergyman, and, I trust, a Lover of the *Lord Jesus Christ*; no wonder then, I am, as it were, *constrained* thus to address your Lordship, in a Letter indeed of Thanks and Congratulation, for your late very excellent and Christian Charge to the Clergy of that Diocese, over which the *Holy Ghost* has made your Lordship

ship Overseer. Oh! my Lord, what Joy has it given me, and all Christian People, to see a Prelate, a Person of your Lordship's high Station in the Church, thus evidence the great Love he has for his Master? What Joy, I say, to read that glorious Paragraph, *My Brethren, I must beg you to rise up with me against Moral Preaching, with what Success have we us'd it?* Alas! my Lord, with what Success indeed, unless this be called Success, that we have preached those who were once the People of God, almost into a total Forgetfulness of the *Lord* that bought them.

Justification by Faith, my Lord, is the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*; it is the Doctrine of the pure Church of *England*; it is the Doctrine of her Homilies and Articles; it is the Doctrine which all her Clergy have subscribed to, yet too many of them disregard: It is this, and *this only*, we should preach up in our Churches; the Fall of *Adam*, and our Loss in his Fall; the Power of working lost to us in him; and the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*

Christ imputed to us for our Recovery: The Free Grace of God, who knowing our Incapacity, has cloathed every true Believer with the Righteousness of his Blessed Son, has changed the Terms of our Acceptance with him, from, *Do this and live*, into that most comfortable Sentence, *Believe and thou shalt be saved*; Oh! the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! Oh! my Lord, what Anguish has it many Times given me, and indeed all sincere Christians, to see our Pulpits filled with People really preaching up themselves rather than their Master; whose Sermons were calculated to sooth the Ears, instead of feeding the Souls of their Flock; preaching for their own Glory and Advancement, and not for the Salvation of those they had the Care of; of whom it may indeed justly be said, * *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not*

* Jer. xxiii. 21.

spoken unto them, yet they prophesied.
 Others again preaching to a worse End, building up the Salvation of Man upon his own Works, and thus giving him to share with *Jesus Christ* in the great Work of Salvation : What are we flying back into, my Lord, if such Doctrine is continued ? Are we not flying back to that very Yoke, we fled from in the Reformation ? What is *Popery*, but a Religion established upon Works, and Self-Righteousness ? And what are we going back into but *Popery* again, if we preach up Works instead of Faith in *Jesus Christ* ?

Not that I am here, my Lord, contending against Works, God forbid ! *Do we abolish the Law by Faith, yea rather we establish it :* All I plead for, yet not I, but the *Lord* ; not I, but the Holy Scriptures ; not I, but the Articles, and Homilies, of our Church, is this : That the Fundamentals of our Religion are Faith in *Christ Jesus*, who will dare deny it ? Let that but once be fixed in the Heart, and Holiness and Good Works, will as necessarily

sarily flow from it, as the Fruit from the Tree we have planted.

Why then is not this inculcated? Why is not this, and indeed *this only*, strongly pressed upon the People? Why are not their Hearts made to burn within them, to hear us preach the Grace of God in *Jesus Christ*; since this, and this alone, can give them that Peace of God which passes all Understanding? It is in vain, my Lord, that we preach against *Swearing*, it is in vain, that we preach against *Drunkenness*, it is in vain that we preach up the *Moral Virtues*, and decry the reigning Vices of Mankind; How long, as your Lordship well observes, have we tried this Scheme without Success? How long have your Half-Christians given us a lifeless hearing, and the Wicked and Prophane turned their Backs, and laughed at our cold Doctrine. Nothing but Gospel has the Promises of being watered from above; nothing but Gospel is the Power of God unto Salvation. Let us preach up *Jesus Christ*, the Blood of the Sprinkling, Repentance, and Remission of Sins: Let us

fix the great and glorious Promises of the Gospel, the incorruptible Crown of Glory reserved for all those that love the Appearing of the *Lord Jesus*; Let us, I say, fix this in the Hearts of our People; let us teach them to love *God*, for the great Things he has done for us in *Christ Jesus*; let us thus lay the Ax to the Root, and my Soul to Nothing, my Lord, all Vice and Iniquity, every Sin, and every kind of Transgression, nay even the very Inclination to it, will quickly vanish away.

Having thus far given your Lordship my hearty Thanks, and Congratulations, for the great Work, reviving under your Lordship's Influence, give me Leave to cast my Eyes a little lower in the Charge given to the Clergy of your Lordship's Diocese; it is with respect to some few Words levelled at a Set of People called *Methodists*: To remove all prejudice from what I am about to say, I beg Leave to assure the World, that if they hold any Principles, contrary to the Spirit of true and solid Christianity, I know nothing of *such* their Principles, and yet

yet I humbly think I know them all: Give me leave to say further, and that upon the Word of a *Clergyman*, that I neither know, nor am known by Mr. *Wesley*, or Mr. *Whitefield*, whom the World calls the Broachers, but I, the Revivers of this Old-New Doctrine: But shall I not speak the Truth? Shall a Minister of the *God of Truth*, dare himself to deny the Truth? *God* forbid! How should I fear, if I did, least the *Lord Jesus*, who is *the Way*, and *the Truth*, should turn his Back upon my Soul, on the Great Day of his Revelation.

All I have to say concerning this People, will take up but little of your Lordship's Time, since it is confined to a short Paragraph or two in your Lordship's Charge; and therein I beg Pardon, if I say, your Lordship seems to set out in an Error, a Mistake in the very Portal. Your Lordship begins thus, *There are some who are gone out from among us.* Oh! my Lord, with how much more Propriety, (and, I may say, Truth, as your Lordship seems only to have

been wrong informed;) I say, with how much more Propriety and Truth might your Lordship have said, There are some who have been *driven out from among us*. I am very far, as I have before hinted, from thinking your Lordship has therein said one Word, more or less, than you thought: But, my Lord, are People to be condemn'd unheard? *Does our Law condemn a Man before it bears him?* Has your Lordship ever read Mr. Wesley's *Appeal?* No! — why then your Lordship has condemned those whom you have never heard in their own Defence. Give me Leave, my Lord, to quote a few Lines from that Book, the Truth of which is easily to be manifested; then see how ill the Facts therein set down, square with your Lordship's Opinion of them.

* " We preach inward Salvation,
" now attainable by Faith; and for
" preaching this, (for no other Crime
" was then so much as pretended) we

* Appeal, 4to. p. 35.

" were

" were forbid to preach any more, in
 " any of those Churches, where, till
 " then, we were gladly received ;
 " and not being suffered to preach it
 " in the usual Places, we declare it
 " wheresoever a Door is opened, ei-
 " ther in a Mountain, or a Plain, or
 " by a River Side ; nor dare we re-
 " frain, *a Dispensation of the Gospel*
 " *is committed to me, and woe is me*
 " *if I preach not the Gospel.*" And
 who would not do the same, that
 lov'd the *Lord Jesus Christ*? Would
 not your Lordship? For my Part,
 I have that high Opinion, of your
 Lordship's Christianity, and Zeal for
 God, by the Spirit that breathes in
 your Lordship's late Charge, that I
 should never be more disappointed,
 than in finding your Lordship, if un-
 der the same Circumstances, any other-
 wise employed than in preaching up
Jesus Christ, any where, and every
where, however apparently, as your
Lordship calls it, immethodical.

I now beg your Lordship would be
 pleased to weigh these Truths, and
 then I ask these Questions : Are they
 gone out from among us ? Or have we

not rather *driven* them out? Away with all Prejudice, and let God be glorified in our Answer; Which of these is the Truth? I ask it in the Name of my Master, my Master the *Lord Jesus Christ*, for whose Name I am ready to lay down my Life this Moment: If it is granted, as I think it must, in Behalf of these *immethodical* Preachers, I ask next, for what Cause were they driven out? For preaching *Salvation attainable by Faith*, and this in a Christian Country? Oh, monstrous! *Tell it not in Gath!* For preaching up *Salvation by Faith*, are the Ministers of *Jesus Christ* forbidden the Pulpits? Alas! my good Lord, is there any other Channel to *Salvation*? Is there any other *Gospel*? Can we find a better Way to *Heaven*? Will not this produce in us *all Manner of Good Works*? Is not this *Yoke easy*, and this *Burthen light*, *Believe and thou shalt be saved*? Will any Man point me out an easier and a safer Way than this, *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy Heart that God has raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be*

be saved? Oh ! let these Things be well weighed, and the Mouth of all Calumny be stopped,

There is a second Thing laid to the Charge of these People by your Lordship, which I also think it my Duty to take some Notice of ; and that I think is couched in these Words, “ That “ they refuse to be under Political Go-“ vernment, and are therefore no “ Friends to the Hierarchy.” Oh ! my Lord, how has your Lordship been imposed on, and how undeservedly have these unhappy People suffered in your Lordship’s Opinion ? Why, my Lord, they are ready, I answer for them ; and that only upon what I read of them, (for little more of them do I know;) I say, they are ready, *whenever* and *wherever* called upon, to confess and defend all they have subscribed to in their Ordination : Give me Leave to give one more Transcript out of the same Book I before quoted *.

* Appeal, 4to. p. 42.

“ However

" However, we cannot, it is said,
 " be Friends to the Church, because
 " we do not obey the Governors of
 " it; and submit ourselves (as at our
 " Ordination we promised to do) to
 " all their Godly Admonitions, and
 " Injunctions; I answer, in every in-
 " dividual Point of an indifferent
 " Nature, we do, and will, by the
 " Grace of *God*, obey the Governors
 " of the Church; but the testifying
 " the Gospel of the Grace of *God*, is
 " not a Point of an indifferent Nature;
 " the Ministry which we have re-
 " ceived at the Hand of the *Lord*
 " *Jesus* we are at all Hazards to ful-
 " fil; it is the Burden of the *Lord*,
 " which is laid upon us here; and are
 " we not to obey *God* rather than
 " Man? Nor do we in any Ways
 " violate the Promise which each of
 " us made, when it was said unto
 " him, Take thou Authority to preach
 " the Word of *God*, in the Name
 " of the Father, and of the Son, and
 " of the Holy Ghost; we then pro-
 " mised to submit (mark the Words)
 " to the Godly Admonitions and In-
 " junctions of our Ordinary; but we
 " did

“ did not, could not, promise to obey
 “ such Injunctions as we know are
 “ contrary to the Word of *God*.”

Very just, my Lord; as clear a Truth in my Eyes, as the Sun at his full Lustre, in the Meridian; for Example, if your Lordship should command me (which I am sure your Lordship will not do by me, nor any of your Clergy) to preach up Salvation, by some other Name, than that of the *Lord Jesus Christ*; your Lordship could not wonder much, if I withdrew my Obedience from such a Command; for notwithstanding the great Love and Veneration I always had for your Lordship, and now (since your Lordship's Charge) much more than ever, yet I beg Leave, to assure the World in general, that I would not lose my Soul to obey your Lordship, nor all the Bishops in *Christendom*.

The last Thing I shall take Notice of, and which indeed cannot with any Justice be passed over, is the grand Charge your Lordship lays to these

these People, of being *immethodical*: My Lord, I only take up the Cause thus slightly, in the Absence of those who can, and no doubt will do it hereafter, more efficaciously; your Lordship's Accusation is couched in these Words, *Of whom it may be said that their Preaching is right and good in the main, though the Persons are immethodical in their Practice*; how did it rejoice my Heart, and indeed that of every true Lover of *Jesus Christ*, to hear these Words; for indeed, my Lord, they are Truth; your Lordship never spoke a greater in your Life, and the *Lord* will bear Witness to it: What a true and glorious Concession has your Lordship here made? Is their Doctrine right, and good, why then are the Preachers of it despised and treated as the Off-scouring of the People? Aye, but they are *immethodical*; wherefore are they so? Let those answer *that*, who have driven them to it; and who are those, my Lord, who, but those, who have refused them their Churches to preach in? Had they declined preaching in the Churches, they were indeed of themselves

selves *immethodical*; but if they are refused the Liberty of preaching in the Churches, and that indeed almost over this whole Land; pray, my Lord, who made them so? Is not a *Dispensation of the Gospel committed unto them*? Only *try them*, my Lord; send for them to your Churches; you already approve their Doctrine, you acknowledge it is right and good in the main, send for them then; bid them go into your Pulpits; and if they refuse, I will join Hand and Heart with your Lordship, and give them up as *Schismatics*.

Oh! my Lord, pardon my Zeal for the Cause of *Jesus Christ*; I have declared before, and do now again declare, that the Heads of this Sect of People (as it is invidiously termed) are wholly Strangers to me; and indeed but few, very few of their Followers have I any Acquaintance with: It is true, I have some of their Books, wherein I find so much of the Spirit of *Primitive Christianity*; wherein I see the *Holy Ghost*, so clearly manifested to the World; wherein I see that almost exploded Doctrine of

Justification

Justification by Faith so strongly inculcated; and in short wherein I see so much of the *Mind, that was in Christ Jesus*, that I must own, if this is *Methodism*, I have sometimes been tempted to wish, every Man a *Methodist*, in order to his being a Christian.

If, therefore, the only Prejudice your Lordship has to these People, is their being *immethodical* in their *Practice*, it is in the Power of your Lordship, and every Bishop in the Land, to remove this Stumbling-block: Their Doctrine is allowed to be right and good; why then, my Lord, give them Admission to promulgate this right and true Doctrine in your Pulpits; order the Clergy of every Diocese to give them the same Admission: Tell them indeed, charge them themselves, to preach the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and that with the same Spirit and Power, and then the Noise of these new Preachers will quickly vanish away. Away with your Morality, Metaphysics, and Doctrines of Works, from our Pulpits: Preach up *Jesus Christ*

Christ, and him crucified ; Justification through Faith in his Blood ; the Free Grace of God in remitting Sins to all those who believe in the Blessed Redeemer : Down with all Self-righteousness ; all Works, but those which flow from Faith working by Love ; a lively Faith in *Jesus Christ* ; and even at last give all the Glory to God, for the gracious Gift of such a Faith, as shall first *justify* the Person, and then *sanctify* the Soul ; working in us that which is pleasing in his Sight, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord ; to whom be given, as is most due, all Glory and Honour, both in Heaven and in Earth, in Time and to all Eternity. *Amen.*

I am,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most dutiful Son in CHRIST JESUS,

Aug. 12,
1748.

A CLERGYMAN.

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